

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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EXDIS, FOR GELB ONLY FROM BENNET

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: PERSIAN GULF STUDY

PURSUANT TO OUR DISCUSSION MONDAY ABOUT THE HUMPHREY-CASE
SENSE OF COMMITTEE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A PERSIAN GULF
STUDY, I CONTACTED THEIR RESPECTIVE STAFFS THIS MORNING. IN
VIEW OF THE PRESIDENT'S ANTICIPATED POLICY STATEMENT ON
GLOBAL ARMS TRANSFER RESTRAINT, MCCALL AND BRYEN FELT
HUMPHREY AND CASE WOULD NOT REQUIRE THE PERSIAN GULF STUDY.
WE AGREED THAT EACH WOULD RECEIVE A LETTER WHEN THE P.D. IS
AVAILABLE INDICATING THAT THIS WAS DESIGNED TO COVER THE
REQUIREMENT OF THE HUMPHREY-CASE RESOLUTION.

THIS DOES NOT, HOWEVER, SOLVE THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM OF
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JUSTIFYING MASSIVE ARMS TRANSFERS TO PERSIAN GULF STATES,
PARTICULARLY POTENTIAL ENEMIES OF ISRAEL. WE FACE THE
IMMINENT PROSPECT OF CONSULTING ON NEW PACKAGES FOR SAUDI
ARABIA, EGYPT AND IRAN. UNLESS THESE CONSULTATIONS AND IN-
EVITABLE HEARINGS REFLECT A CONSISTENT AND RATIONAL POLICY
TOWARD THE AREA AS WELL AS CONSISTENCY WITH OUR GLOBAL
TRANSFER POLICY, I PREDICT THAT CONGRESS, AT SOME POINT IN

THE NEAR FUTURE, WILL VETO A SALE.

THEREFORE, WHETHER OR NOT CASE AND HUMPHREY ULTIMATELY WANT THE PERSIAN GULF STUDY, WE NEED SOMETHING LIKE IT TO LOCALIZE PRM-12 FOR OUR OWN PROTECTION. SUCH A STUDY COULD HARDLY SUBSTITUTE FOR THE CASE-BY-CASE JUDGMENTS WHICH WILL INEVITABLY HAVE TO BE MADE ON SPECIFIC SALES, BUT IT WOULD SHOW CONGRESS THAT WE HAVE THOUGHT THE PROBLEM THROUGH AND HELP WITH THE RATIONALE.

I SUGGEST THAT WE PRESS AHEAD VERY HARD ON THE IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA STUDIES AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PERSIAN GULF STUDY. WE MAY VERY WELL WISH TO WITHHOLD ANY LARGE, NEW SALES PROPOSALS FOR THE AREA UNTIL THESE STUDIES ARE COMPLETE.

I ALSO SUGGEST THAT YOU RAISE THIS WHOLE QUESTION WITH SECRETARY VANCE IF THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF DURING YOUR TRIP. EXECUTIVE-CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS ON THE MIDEAST ARE TEMPORARILY HARMONIOUS BECAUSE OF THE AGREEMENT REACHED ON PRM-12 AND BECAUSE WE SEEM TO BE WORKING DILIGENTLY TOWARD MIDEAST PEACE. IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE TO HAVE A CONFRONTATION OVER ARMS SALES FOR LACK OF AN ORDERLY AND WELL-ARTICULATED POLICY.

I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS WITH BENSON WHO AGREES WITH MY ANALYSIS AND CONCERNS IN THE FIRST THREE PARAGRAPHS. SHE ALSO FAVORS MOVING WITH DISPATCH ON THE SAUDI ARABIAN AND IRANIAN STUDIES. HER CONCERN, HOWEVER, IS THAT FOR
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PERSIAN GULF STUDIES TO BE OF ANY VALUE TO US THEY WOULD HAVE TO ZOOM ON FUNDAMENTAL CONSIDERATION OF OUR PERSIAN GULF INTERESTS, OF HOW THOSE INTERESTS ARE RELATED TO MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS, AND OF HOW WE JUDGE SAUDI AND IRANIAN DEFENSE NEEDS AS CONTRASTED WITH HOW THEY JUDGE THEM THEMSELVES. SUCH STUDIES WILL PROBABLY IPSO FACTO BE TOO FRANK AND SENSITIVE TO BE OF DIRECT VALUE TO US FOR USE ON THE HILL. SHE THINKS WE WILL HAVE TO DO THE "IN-HOUSE" STUDIES FIRST AND THEN EXTRAPOLATE FROM THEM FOR USE WITH CONGRESS. MIDDLE EAST SITUATION WILL NOW OF COURSE BECOME MUDDY AND EVEN MORE SENSITIVE BECAUSE OF THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS, HENCE THE STUDIES ARE EVEN MORE IMPERATIVE.

CHRISTOPHER

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